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INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: NA/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: TUCSA'S 21ST "COMING-OF-AGE" CONFERENCE: PRINCIPAL
DEVELOPMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

A. DECISION TO GIVE QUALIFIED SUPPORT TO SAG'S ANTI-INFLATION
PROGRAM DESPITE 17.9 PERCENT RAND DEVALUATION ANNOUNCED ONLY 24
HOURS BEVORE CONFERENCE BEGAN.

B. DECISION TO DEPLORE SAG'S RECENTLY-ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO
UPGRADE SCOPE AND STATUS OF LIAISON AND WORKS COMMITTEE SYSTEM.

C. NUMEROUS ELOQUENT AND EVEN SAVAGE INDICTMENTS OF SAG'S POLICIES
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IN SUCH AREAS AS HOUSING, EDUCATION AND PENSIONS.

D. REFUSAL TO PERMIT REPRESENTATIVES OF FIVE DURBAN-BASED BLACK UNIONS TO ENTER CONFERENCE HALL AS OBSERVERS.

THESE AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS DRAMATIZED BOTH STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF TUCSA IN ITS "COMING-OF-AGE" YEAR, E.G. IT FELT STRONG ENOUGH TO LASH OUT AT SAG AND ITS POLICIES WITH SPEECHES AND RESOLUTIONS BUT NOT TO WITHHOLD SUPPORT FOR SAG'S STILL UNPUBLISHED ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM; IT FELT SECURE ENOUGH TO REJECT WITH SOMETHING APPROACHING CONTEMPT SAG'S INTENTION TO UPGRADE COMMITTEE SYSTEM FOR BLACK WORKERS BUT NOT TO WAIVE RIGID CONFERENCE RULES TO PERMIT SMALL GROUP OF DURBAN DISSIDENTS TO OBSERVE PROCEEDINGS.

2. TUCSA HELD ITS "COMING-OF-AGE" CONFERENCE FROM SEPTEMBER 22-26 IN MAIN HALL OF NEARLY-COMPLETED GARMENT WORKERS UNION CENTER IN CAPE TOWN. DELEGATES IN ATTENDANCE REPRESENTED ABOUT 60 AFFILIATED UNIONS AND ABOUT 200,000 OF TUCSA'S 212,000 MEMBERS (APPROXIMATELY 60 PERCENT OF WHOM ARE EITHER COLOURED OR ASIAN). OTHER PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED BLACK OBSERVERS REPRESENTING NATIONAL UNION OF CLOTHING WORKERS (OF WHICH LUCY MVUBELO IS GENERAL SECRETARY), JOHANNESBURG-BASED URBAN TRAINING PROJECT (UTP), UNREGISTERED BANK EMPLOYEES AND LEATHER WORKERS UNIONS WHICH RECENTLY AFFILIATED WITH TUCSA AND DURBAN-BASED CLOTHING AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION. PRESENT AS OBSERVER WAS PRESIDENT A.I. NIEUWOUDT OF ALL-WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (CONFED) WHO MADE FERVENT PLEA IN AFRIKAANS FOR TUCSA-CONFED COOPERATION IN WAR AGAINST INFLATION AND IN EFFORTS TO STEM FURTHER DETERIORATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. OBSERVERS INCLUDED BRIAN HOLLERAN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF RHODESIAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS (ONLY FOREIGN TRADE UNIONIST IN ATTENDANCE) AND REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVEN COUNTRIES -- UK, WEST GERMANY, FRANCE, ITALY, NETHERLANDS AND AUSTRALIA IN ADDITION TO US.

3. PRINCIPAL THEMES--

A. WHAT TRADE UNION MOVEMENT SHOULD DO TO HELP COMBAT DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION NOW IN ITS SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR IN WAKE OF 17.9 PERCENT DEVALUATION AND IN VIEW OF SAG'S RECENT CALL FOR RESTRAINT IN DEMANDING CATCH-UP WAGE INCREASES. B. NEED TO DEVELOP AUTHENTIC COLLECTIVE BARGAINING MACHINERY FOR BLACK WORKERS, I.E. TRADE UNIONS, NOT COMMITTEES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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C. NEED TO PRESS FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL REGARDLESS OF RACE OR SEX.

D. HARDY-PERENNIAL-TYPE ISSUES SUCH AS RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, HOUSING, EDUCATION AND PENSIONS (RESOLUTIONS ON WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY).

4. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS --

A. ELECTION OF FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.VAN TONDER (SECRETARY OF PRETORIA-BASED SOUTH AFRICAN TYPOGRAPHICAL UNIONS) TO SUCCEED RECENTLY-DECEASED TOM MURRAY BY MAJORITY OF ABOUT 175,000 VOTES OUT OF 200,000.

B. ELECTION OF FOURTH VICE PRESIDENT R.C. WEBB TO SUCCEED VAN TONDER AS FIRST VICE PRESIDENT BY MAJORITY OF OVER 190,000 (THUS PROVIDING HIM WITH GOOD CHANCE TO BECOME TUCSA'S FIRST COLOURED PRESIDENT NEXT YEAR).

C. REFUSAL TO PERMIT REPRESENTATIVES OF FIVE DURBAN-BASED UNREGISTERED UNIONS (WHICH COMPRISE RECENTLY-ORGANIZED TRADE UNION ADVISORY AND COORDINATING COUNCIL -- TUACC) TO ATTEND CONFERENCE ON GROUNDS THEY HAD NOT REPLIED PROPERLY TO INVITATIONS AND DID NOT POSSESS ACCEPTABLE CREDENTIALS.

D. DECISION TAKEN FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION DISCUSSIONS MORNING AND AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 25 (APPARENTLY UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM PRETORIA) TO SUPPORT SAG'S ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM WITH UNDERTAKING TO LIMIT DEMANDS FOR WAGE INCREASES MADE DURING NEXT SIX MONTHS TO 70 PERCENT OF COL INCREASES (EXCEPT FOR WAGE EARNERS UNDER POVERTY DATUM LINE AND PROVIDED SAG ABLE TO GET OTHER MAJOR SECTORS OF ECONOMY TO MAKE SIMILAR SACRIFICES).

E. SEVERAL DEVASTATINGLY-CONVINCING SPEECHES ON TOTAL INADEQUACY OF SAG-IMPOSED COMMITTEES AS REALISTIC OR FAIR OR EQUAL MEANS OF ENABLING UNSOPHISTICATED BLACKS TO ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL BARGAINING WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

F. CALL BY GUEST SPEAKER PROF S.P. CILLIERS OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY FOR "APPOINTMENT OF AN IMPARTIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO OUR FORMAL SYSTEM FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LABOUR RELATIONS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH THE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION TO DEVISE A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD MAKE DUE ALLOWANCES FOR THE REALITIES OF THE PLURALITY OF OUR SOCIETY WITHOUT EXCLUDING INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OR CATEGORIES OF THE POPULATION FROM FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING WITH REGARD TO THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION." HE WENT ON TO SAY, "I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO USE THIS OCCASION TO LAUNCH A PLEA TO GOVERNMENT TO INSTITUTE SUCH AN INVESTIGATION RATHER THAN TO CONTINUE TO INSTITUTE STOP-GAP AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION ON A TRIAL AND ERROR BASIS."

5. EVALUATION OF CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS --

A. TUCSA DECIDED TO SUPPORT SAG'S ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM DESPITE VERY SERIOUS DOUBTS AND RESERVATIONS IN PART BECAUSE IT DID NOT SAG TO BE IN POSITION TO BLAME FAILURE OF PROGRAM ON TUCSA AND IN PART BECAUSE IT HOPED POSITIVE RESPONSE WOULD PROMPT SAG TO

VIEW TUCSA IN MORE FAVORABLE LIGHT THAN HERETOFORE (RATHER THAN EVEN LESS FAVORABLE LIGHT).

B. TUCSA'S REFUSAL TO PERMIT IDEOLOGICALLY-AND-MOTIVATIONALLY-SUSPECT DURBAN OBSERVERS TO ENTER CONFERENCE HALL WAS GRIST FOR MILL OF CRITICS WHO CONSIDER TUCSA TO BE HYPOCRITICAL AND UNWILLING TO DEAL WITH ANY OUTSIDERS EXCEPT ON ITS OWN RIGID AND BUREAUCRATIC TERMS.

6. EVALUATION OF TUCSA AS IT COMES OF AGE --

A. WHILE TUCSA AT 21 IS LARGEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL MULTI-RACIAL ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, ITS ABILITY TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS IS SHARPLY LIMITED BECAUSE SAG IS IN VERY STRONG POSITION TO IGNORE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUTSPOKEN OPPOSITION GROUP WHICH HAS NO EFFECTIVE SANCTIONS AT ITS DISPOSAL SINCE 60 PERCENT OF ITS MEMBERS DISFRANCHISED AND STRIKES ONLY THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

B. SYMPATHETIC CRITIC CONTEMPLATING 21ST CONFERENCE FINDS HIMSELF WISHING TUCSA HAD FELT STRONG ENOUGH--OR INDIGNANT ENOUGH -- TO WITHHOLD SUPPORT FOR SAG'S ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM AT LEAST UNTIL IT HAD HAD TIME TO GIVE PROPER CONSIDERATION TO POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON PRICES, ETC. OF 17.9 PERCENT DEVALUATION AND ALSO THAT IT HAD BEEN FLEXIBLE ENOUGH AND SURE ENOUGH OF ITSELF TO PRACTICE DOMESTIC "DETENTE" IN ENCOUNTER WITH DURBAN DISSIDENTS WHICH IT HAS BEEN SO SELF-RIGHTEOUSLY URGING UPON SAG.

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